(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action proposed not to denotify Kudremukh National Park where the elephants are taking shelter as their refuge?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The latest "State of Forest Report' published by the Forest Survey of India does not show any significant decline in the forest Cover in any of the districts providing habitat to elephants in Karnataka. The movement of elephants to new areas is sometimes an outcome of blockage of forest corridors along the traditional migratory routes of elephants.

(c) The population of elephants in Kudremukch National Park is insignificant there being only 3 elephants according to the census is 1997-98. In any case, the question of denotification of Kudremukh National Park does not arise in view of the fact that the final notification of National Park under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has not yet been issued.

Production of Transgenic Cotton

†*446. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an experiment production of transgenic cotton was carried out in various regions of the country;

(b) if so, the names of institutes which carried out such experiment and the regions where that land was located;

(c) whether agro-scientists had conducted any study about the post-experiment impacts; and

(d) if so, the names of these scientists and the details of their study report?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI):

(a) to (d) Contained limited field experiments on transgenic cotton were carried out in various regions of the country. These experiments were not for production of transgenic cotton but were for evaluation of transgenic characters in cotton plants *i.e.* the effect of an introduced transgene that codes for a protein (Bt protein), produced by Bacillus thuringiensis, a bacterium commonly

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

occurring in nature. During 1998-2000, evaluation of agronomic performance and on-farm trials for transgenic cotton to ascertain the yield, morphological characteristics, persistence, germination rate and pest load were carried out by the scientists of M/s Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Co. Ltd. (MAHYCO), Mumbai in private lands and State Agricultural Universities in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. The institutes were Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University Rajendra Nagar, at its Regional Research Station, Lamb, Guntur, as well as at Warangal in Andhra Pradesh, Punjab Rao Krishi Vidyapeeth at Akola; and Marathwada Agricultural University, Parbhani in Maharashtra. The effect of Bt cottonseeds on goats as model was studied at the Indian Toxicological Research Centre (ITRC), Lucknow and Bt protein was not found to be toxic. The agro-scientists of MAHYCO has conducted detailed post-harvest observations on the impact of Bt cotton cultivars at Jalna in Maharashtra; Dharwad in Karnataka; Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. A team of over 20 scientists of R & D laboratory of MAHYCO led by Dr. Usha Zehr, Dr. S.K. Mukherjee and others conducted these experiments. It was concluded from these studies that there was significant increase in the yield from transgenic plants. There was also noticeable reduction in the spraying of chemical pesticides for bollworms, a major pest of cotton. The residues of Bt protein in soil were either non-existent or were extremely low and did not have any effect on the microbial populations of the soil samples. The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee has approved on 30th June 2000, large scale field trials with scientific monitoring in some States. Work has started in the States of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Recognition of Sanskrit Vidyapeethams as Deemed Universities

*447. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the Rashtriya Sanskrita Vidyapeethams have been recognised as deemed universities;

(b) if so, the names thereof;

(c) whether certificates issued by these deemed universities are recognised at par with the degrees issued by universities; and